

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRASIL 04577 061340Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----061342Z 083009 /43
Z O 061325Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO AMEMBASSY LIMA FLASH
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2039

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 4577

EXDIS

LIMA FOR TODMAN, PASTOR

DEPT PASS WHITE HOUSE

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS OVIP (MRS. CARTER), PGOV, BR, US
SUBJECT: MRS. CARTER'S BRASIL VISIT: PAST INVITATIONS TO PRESIDENT
GEISEL TO VISIT US

REF: STATE 129449

1. REFTTEL CONCERNING BACKGROUND OF GEISEL EFFECTIVE REFUSAL
OF FORD INVITATION TO VISIT WASHINGTON RAISES IN MY MIND, PERHAPS
QUITE WRONGLY, THE POSSIBILITY THAT MRS. CARTER WILL BE EXTENDING
A SMILAR INVITATION TO GEI SEL ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT.

2. AGAINST THIS POSSIBILITY, I WISH TO RECORD MY STRONG BELIEF THAT
IT WOULD BE A SERIOUS MISTAKE AND AN EMBARRASSMENT FOR PRESIDENT
CARTER. AS THE EMBASSY HAS REPORTED, THE GEISEL GOVERNMENT HAS
BEEN ENGAGED IN A "HARDENING",
MORE AUTHORITARIAN, PROCESS WHOSE NATURE WAS INDICATED BY THE SO-
CALLED REFORMS OF APRIL THAT GIMMICKED THE 1978 ELECTIONS AND WHICH,
ACCORDING TO PRESENT INDICATORS, WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE. FOR
EXAMPLE, THERE IS A REAL POSSIBILITY THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS HOLDING
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OFF ON ADDITIONAL ACTIONS AGAINST THE OPPOSITION UNTIL, SIGNI-
FICANTLY , AFTER MRS. CARTER'S VISIT. THE GEISEL GOVERNMENT HAS SUFFE
RENED
IMPORTANT LOSSES OF POPULARITY IN RECENT MONTHS, AND THE GULF
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SOCIETY HAS WIDENED. IN THESE
CIRCUMSTANCES, THE GEISEL GOVERNMENT WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO HAVE
WHAT COULD EASILY BE INTERPRETED AS A SIGN OF APPROVAL FROM THE

SUG, ESPECIALLY FROM THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. (YOU WILL REMEMBER THE STRONG GOB EFFORT TO PUBLISH THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER JUST BEFORE THE APRIL MEASURES WERE TAKEN.) BY THE SAME TOKEN, THE ELEMENTS IN THE BRAZILIAN SOCIETY THAT ARE UNEASY AND APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF THE "CLOSING " OF AN ALREADY BASICALLY AUTHORITARIAN SOCIETY AND ARE MAKING EFFORTS TO AVOID FURTHER HARD MEASURES WOULD BE DISCOURAGED AND EVEN SHOCKED. MUCH OF THE CURRENT PRESSURE BY THESE ELEMENTS FOR A MORE OPEN SOCIETY AND BETTER OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS THE RESULT OF THE EXAMPLE AND TH ECNOURAGEMENT GIVEN BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. AN INVITATION TO GEISEL NOW WOULD APPEAR TO THESE ELEMENTS AS A REVERSAL OF THIS US CONCERN.

3. AN INVITATION WOULD, IT SEEMS TO ME, FLY IN THE FACE OF THE REFERENCE IN THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH TO THE OAS: "YOU WILL FIND THIS COUNTRY--THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA--EAGER TO STAND BESIDE THOSE NATIONS WHICH RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND WHICH PROMOTE DEMOCRATIC IDEALS."

4. IN A PRACTICAL SENSE, IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT GEISEL, BECAUSE OF THE NUCLEAR ISSUE AND, SECONDARILY, THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE AND TRADE QUESTIONS, WOULD ADOPT THE SAME DISCOURTEOUS LINE AS THAT HE FOLLOWED WITH THE FORD INVITATION. THE MERE FACT THAT THE INVITATION HAD BEEN EXTENDED, EVEN THOUGH IT WERE NOT ACCEPTED, WOULD BE SUFFICIENT FOR THE GOB'S POLITICAL PURPOSES. MOREOVER, WE WOULD APPEAR TO BE IMPORTUNING.

5. FINALLY, IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT THE GEISEL ADMINISTRATION HAS AN EFFECTIVE REMAINING LIFE OF ONLY ABOUT SIXTEEN MONTHS (THE SUCCESSOR WILL BE NAMED IN OCTOBER 1978).
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6. FOR ALL THESE REASONS, I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT MY CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INVITATION IS ENTIRELY MISPLACED.
CRIMMINS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, INVITATIONS, HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BRASIL04577
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770200-1133
Format: TEL
From: BRASILIA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770689/aaaaczoi.tel
Line Count: 101
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 388cb784-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 STATE 129449
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2268974
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MRS. CARTER'S BRASIL VISIT: PAST INVITATIONS TO PRESIDENT GEISEL TO VISIT US
TAGS: OVIP, PGOV, BR, US, (CARTER, ROSALYNN), (GEISEL, ERNESTO)
To: LIMA STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/388cb784-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009